

THE OHS PRESS

Building prepares for standardized testing

Sebastian Carrier

Staff Reporter

Standardized tests are a large part of students lives, and they are gaining importance with each year.

Society uses tests like the SAT as a quick way to sum up the intelligence of an individual. Many students find themselves stressed when preparing for standardized tests.

Ricky Li (12), tested a perfect score on both the SAT and ACT, and believes colleges don't have a choice on standardized tests.

"For the vast majority of people, standardized testing is the fairest and most cost-effective way to gain valuable information about college

readiness. However, many colleges are devaluing the role that test scores play in a decision by considering many other factors, such as essays and interviews," Li said.

Jeffrey Rockwell (12), a student who has experience in taking standardized tests, believes the system should be changed.

"At certain universities if you don't have a certain benchmark of a score they won't even look at your application," Rockwell said.

Colleges have many applicants every year, and it would be difficult to assess every student solely on their GPA. Transcripts of all students could be misinterpreted because teachers and school rigor vary and could potentially create complications or bias. Standardized tests are one way

colleges can get an objective picture of students.

But, as Rockwell believes, there are key elements missing from the booklet that can define what school you will continue on to after high school.

"There should be an even more broad test that doesn't analyze a student in just one sitting—perhaps multiple tests or over the course of a couple days," Rockwell said.

Out of all the students in high school, juniors stress about the SAT the most because most colleges need at least one SAT to be taken. The SAT is currently provided by the school for free in mid-April.

Marissa Gordon (11) recently took the SAT. She said she believes the test does do a great job at assessing how students perform academically.

"I wish it were less stressful, but I think a lot of people don't realize that it's not that big of a deal, because we all have the ability to go to college somewhere," Gordon said.

The use of standardized testing to get into college is controversial according to most students. Of course both sides have their valid concerns. However, colleges have few other ways of determining whether the applying student is prepared for their curriculum.

The SAT might seem mammoth when one first encounters it, but there are many less stressful ways to approach it.

Li thought about how he prepared for various standardized tests. One of his main tips included to purchase a "test prep" book. The April SAT

is too soon to make a lot of progress with a prep book. But there are more opportunities to take the SAT than only in April.

"For students new to standardized testing, this can provide many useful strategies on how to test smartly and efficiently, and for students who've got their strategies down, these books also have practice questions to build confidence," Li said.

Rockwell described one way he prepared for his test.

"I'd suggest getting an account on Khan Academy and doing a little bit everyday; it raised my scores a lot," Rockwell said.

Khan Academy is a free website with many different ways to prepare for the SAT.

Gordon said she uses the site to

simulate a real SAT.

"Wake up early and take a practice test on Khan Academy, because that's how the real thing is going to be," Gordon said.

At the end of the day, the test is a test and high school students have been taking them throughout all of their years in school.

Counselors have dealt with standardized testing for much longer than any of the students at the high school. Hedlun Walton, the Director of Guidance, has faith in the Okemos curriculum to prepare students for the standardized tests.

"The kind of daily, and in fact yearly, preparation is going to have the greatest impact and truly gets at what the tests are supposed to measure," Walton said.

Swan Song

After over two decades of service to Okemos Schools, Gene Swan is moving on...



"Mr. Swan is super fun and he always tells us really funny stories. He teaches history in a way that makes us want to learn more and it's really cool"
-Annie Burba (9)

Madeline Robins

Social Media Specialist

On March 10, OHS said goodbye to Gene Swan, valued history teacher and Area Coordinator of 25 years, as he retired from Okemos schools.

Swan taught US History, Government and AP US History with gusto and vigor throughout his time at OHS. However, he is ready for a new challenge and is now doing corporate training at Jackson National in Okemos.

Swan recalls being asked where he saw himself in five, ten and fifteen years when he first interviewed at Okemos.

Thinking back on it, Swan claims that he never wanted to be the kind of teacher that just cruised through the years.

Although he says he has immensely enjoyed his time here, he felt teaching was getting monotonous in his final years and knew he had more to offer.

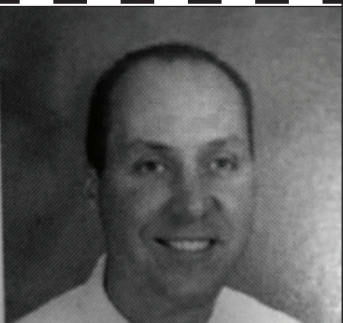
"I did not want to become that teacher who stayed too long and was just going through the motions," Swan said.

One of the things he is looking forward to most about no longer teaching is not having hours of lesson planning and grading—a tedious job after a long ride back to his St. Johns home.

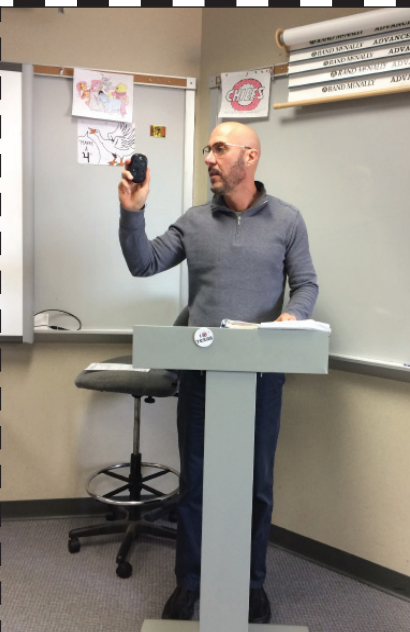
He is also excited about being able to travel more for his job—the seven



"Mr. Swan is a really fun teacher; he makes one of the worst subjects fun and interesting for us"
-Jessica Yang (11)



"The best part of having Mr. Swan as a history teacher was his love of American history and his ability to impart that love onto his students. He also taught that past events are still relevant to today's world. He also had a mean iTunes collection that I wish he could share with the world"
-Jacob Chappelle (Class of 2013)



Courtesy Photos

In his 25 years of service, Gene Swan has become a legend of Upper A Hall. Photos clockwise from top: Swan tells one last story to his 2nd hour APUSH class on his last day. Swan ferociously clicks his computer mouse that never works. Swan in a high school photograph, sporting locks that most OHS students have never seen. Swan in a 1995 OHS yearbook photograph. Swan's favorite magnet displays his hate for the Lone Star State.

minute passing time does not quite provide him time to explore. However, he will miss being able to make connections with students.

"These moments we inspire kids as teachers, we really don't realize that until later," Swan said.

Kyle Billingslea (12) had Mr. Swan for Government last year. Recalling many fond memories of Mr. Swan being caring, funny and loud, Kyle says Mr. Swan taught him how to not be afraid of being an individual.

"[He taught me to] be myself and try to go against fitting in with the crowd," Billingslea said.

Swan was as beloved with his fellow teachers as he was with students. As Area Coordinator, and briefly an administrator at OHS and Chippewa, Swan was always admired for keeping up the team morale and being able to come to fair decisions that each staff member could work with.

After working under him for the past 14 years, Danielle Ives will be

taking over as Area Coordinator of the history department when Swan leaves.

"He's been a great leader in getting us to be a team," Ives said.

Ives added that he will also be missed for his obscure "Fridays with Swan" stories.

These came to be because it was habitually noticed that on Fridays, Swan was always a bit anxious and a little extra strange. The stories he tells on "Fridays with Swan" are

anecdotes Swan randomly shares with his department about an odd experience or event of his past.

The diversity of the Okemos student bodies is one of the things Swan has said he has been most grateful for throughout his years of teaching.

Aside from patience, he said he has been able to learn a great deal about different ethnicities, religions, cultures and beliefs.

When first applying, Swan said Okemos was his first choice in districts

because of how eager the students are to learn. He recognizes and appreciates that he was able to work in a district where students are ready to do the work and put in the studying.

Swan's retirement came at a non-traditional time of year; a marking period still remains for his students.

However, with Chad DeKatch, who taught social studies at OHS from 2010-2015, returning, Swan feels he is leaving his classroom in good hands.

Michigan Women's Hall of Fame moves to Meridian Mall to attract visitors

Monica Delgado

Staff Reporter

This April, the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame is moving from the Cooley-Haze House in downtown Lansing to the Meridian Mall in Okemos.

According to the Interim Executive Director Caitlyn Perry Dial, the exact location of the Hall will be two stores down from Old Navy.

Founded by five Michigan State professors who taught a Women in Society course, the Michigan Women's Studies Association created the historical museum when they leased the Cooley-Haze House in the 1970s. Their goal to have a place for people to become more aware of the history of Michigan women came true when The Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame opened to the public in 1987. The organization has been growing ever since.

Those at the Hall are planning on reimagining the way they honor the history and celebrate the accomplish-

ments of Michigan women. They hope to develop exhibits that will tell the story of Michigan women's history and also honoring the women who have been inducted in the Hall of Fame.

Nicole Verboncoeur (12), who is the leader of feminism club, thinks the Hall will get more attention if it is in a more populated area and a well-known place, so she hopes this move will go well for the Hall.

"[Women's history] is absolutely one of the most important things in history right now because unfortunately a lot of women were overlooked in history because they were women and all this history is lost because of sexism. I think it's important we start revisiting it and look back and see what we are missing," Verboncoeur said.

The Center and Hall was the first women's history museum in Michigan, and the first museum in the country dedicated to the history of one state's women, according to a press release.

Founder and the first Executive Director of the organization, Dr. Gladys Beckwith, served as an unpaid volunteer for over 25 years. Within 30 years, the Center now has paid professionals working full-time and part-time.

Membership is growing within the Center and more than 20 original exhibits about Michigan women have been created, according to the press release.

From the opening in 1987, fewer than 40 women had been inducted into the Hall of Fame, but as of today there are 308 inductees.

Along with the development of exhibits, programs have also expanded, the budget has grown. Attendance to the Center has increased as well.

Inside the museum, there is a resource library and exhibit galleries dedicated to the preservation and presentation of Michigan women's history and art. The Hall began as a non-collecting institution, but now contains an artifact and archival collection that has documented the his-

tory of Michigan women and women nationally.

One of the exhibits that will put on display at the mall is *Ladies of the Lights*. The exhibit explores the history of Michigan's women light-house keepers.

According to Dial, in 2018, there will be an exhibit that celebrates the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in the state of Michigan, achieved in 1918, and later on the national level, which was achieved in 1920.

Organizers of the Hall insisted for the nomination process to be democratic, meaning anyone, anywhere could suggest a possible honoree by filling out and submitting a standard form acknowledging that woman's accomplishments.

These forms are then sent to two panels of judges, one for historical nominations and one for contemporary nominations, of women and men from now and then and from across the state.

Once the judges scored each of the

candidates, their tally sheets are then counted by an independent accounting firm. Nominations form a top 25 nominees for each category would be sent to a second set of judges for their review.

Developers of the Hall were sceptical on how successful the process would be.

Luckily, the first crop of nominations were both large and impressive, leading to an accomplished inaugural class of inductees.

The first induction ceremony and dinner was held on October 20, 1983 in Dearborn where 18 women were recognized. Among the women recognized was Isabella Baumfree, a former slave who nationally became known as a crusader for human rights, and Anna Howard Shaw, a minister and physician who succeeded Susan B. Anthony in leading the National American Woman's Suffrage Association.

Nominations to the Hall were crucial at the beginning when each community rushed to recognize the most important women in their history.

Dial told a press release about how

she and the association are excited to begin a new start for the Center.

"While this move is bittersweet for us, we are looking forward to the opportunity to grow and to the amenities, including ADA accessible exhibits, increased foot-traffic, and ample parking, which our new space will provide at the Meridian Mall," Dial said in the press release.

Maggie McConnell (12) said she believes the Hall of Fame will get much more notice in the Meridian Mall because shoppers will find it interesting to visit.

Young women who are often at the mall could also explore the museum and be inspired by the variety of historical women of Michigan in the Hall of Fame.

"[Awareness of women's history] is very important because women have done so much more than is recorded in history books," McConeel said, "Education is the key to less ignorance, so once people understand the role of women's actions in history then there will be less discrimination."



Diversity Assembly
p. 5



Snowflake Tea and Cafe
p. 11



Face off: Senioritis
p. 15